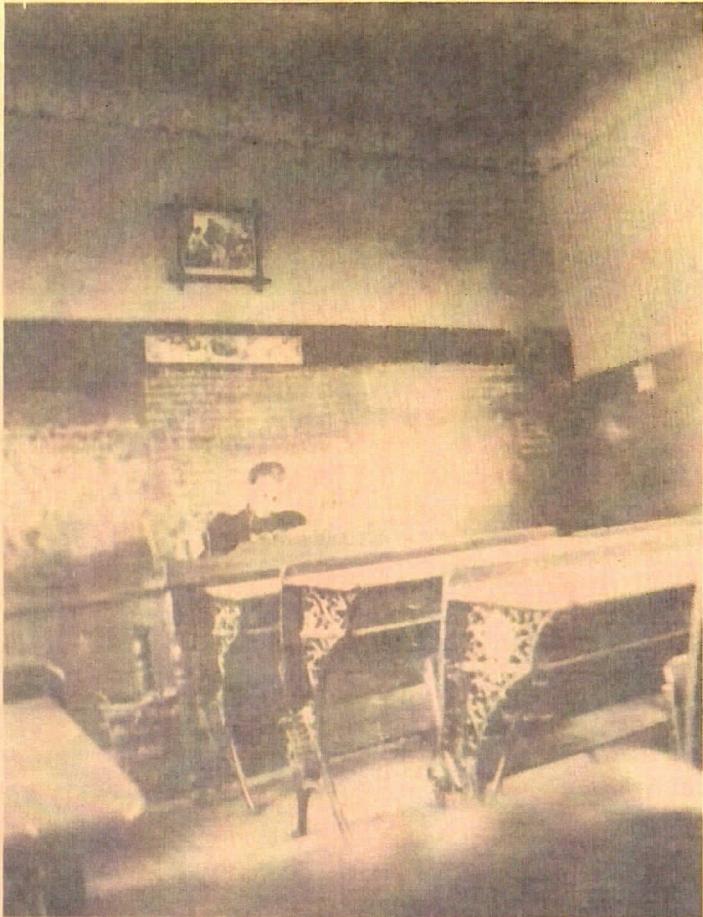


# IN THE BEGINNING



Published Quarterly By  
Woodson County Historical Society  
Yates Center, Kansas  
Vol. 15 - No. 58

## IN THE BEGINNING

Vol. 15 - No. 58

April, 1982

Lester A. Harding, Editor

### Editor's Notes —

We have had a very good response from our subscribers with the red cross in the small box following the Editor's Notes. There are still quite a few that have not paid their subscription. If you have not paid up we may follow up with the red mark or write a note to remind the reader, but that runs into more work for us.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the rush of getting out the January, 1982 issue we left out entirely about the November 1981 meeting that was attended by 40 people. The program was given by Robert S. Bader, Dean of Arts and Science at Missouri University at St. Louis. Mr. Bader was born and grew up in the LeRoy and Neosho Falls area and his talk was about the 'Great Kansas Bond Scandal' of 1933-34, two men former residents of Neosho Falls, the Finney's, father and son, were the cause of three banks failing.

Mr. Bader hopes to have the book by the above name published sometime this year.

\* \* \* \* \*

The cover picture of this issue was taken many years ago in the Washington School at the north part of Yates Center. It was torn down when the new elementary school was built. In the picture is Elizabeth Spencer, a former teacher in that school and some rural schools. Also was a County Superintendent of Woodson County.

Miss Spencer spent the most of her life in the furthering of the education of hundreds of pupils.

We feel that we owe Miss Spencer a great deal for her suggestions and encouragement in our writing down through several years. We also find that there are many pupils of rural schools that remember the visits of Elizabeth Spencer to these schools as the County Superintendent as she always had something to show and entertain these pupils in her visits to the school.

\* \* \* \* \*

## IN THE BEGINNING

Published Quarterly By

Woodson County Historical Society

Yates Center, Kansas

\$4.00 per year

\$1.00 each copy

WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
Organized March, 1968

The January meeting of the Woodson County Historical was held at the Woodson House on Tuesday evening, January 26, 1982.

The program was furnished by Edwina Klick, with slides and comments on her recent trip to western Europe. She was accompanied on this trip by Mrs. Charles Martin.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the last two issues of In The Beginning we have had the largest Memorial group that we have had in the years that we have been an organization.

\* \* \* \* \*

IN MEMORIAN

Wm. Ivan Smith                    73                    February 13, 1982

While Ivan was not a native of Woodson County, he had always took quite an interest in the historical events in the Turkey and Duck Creek areas. He held a Life Membership in the Woodson County Historical Society.

\* \* \* \* \*

Walter E. C. Weide                89                    December 27, 1981

Walter was born and spent about 88 years of his life in Woodson County. He had been a member of the Woodson County Historical for several years and attended the meetings regular until about two years before his passing.

\* \* \* \* \*

Estil McKinsey                    75                    December 28, 1981

Estil was an active member of the Woodson County Historical Society and had been for several years. He had lived in the Rose community for quite a few years, both before and after retiring.

\* \* \* \* \*

Milo Hakes                        95                    January, 1982

Mr. Hakes was not a native of Woodson County, but had lived here several years. Several years ago he was given an Honorary Membership in the Woodson County Historical Society. For a few years he had been making his home with his daughter, near Washington, D.C.

Join and Support The

WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Life Membership \$25.00

Regular \$2.00

## THE MENTZER'S —

We are combining the story of two separate families into one story for the first time. One reason for that is the two men are brothers, Charles O. Mentzer and his brother John Fred Mentzer. These two men married sisters. Charley O. married Nettie Wells, and her sister Anna married John Fred Mentzer, making their children double cousins.

Charles and Fred Mentzer were both born in Kewanee, Illinois. Their parents were George and Emeline (Minnick) Mentzer. Charles was born in 1869, and Fred in March, 1871. The rest of the Mentzer children were born in Woodson County.

Early in the spring of 1871, George and Emeline, and their two small sons left Kewanee, in a covered wagon, with them was a friend of George Mentzer, George W. Allen. They arrived in Neosho Falls in May, 1871. Obtaining room at the Fall House for Mrs. Mentzer and the two boys, Mentzer and Allen loaded the lumber to build a small house and drove to the claim that Mentzer had purchased from the M.K.&T. Railroad the previous year.

Charles and Fred Mentzer grew up on this farm with upper Owl Creek cutting across a corner of it. This part of Owl Creek is now called West Owl Creek. One day Charles and Fred were sent to the corn field near the creek, when their dogs treed some animals up a tree. The boys were 10 and 12, and thought the dogs had treed two coons. They turned out to be wildcats and attacked one of the boys. It was dispatched with their corn knives. The dogs attacked the other and the boys again used their corn knives to help out.

Other brothers and sisters in this family were, Henry, Phillip, Ernest, Clarence A., Susie and Clara.

On October 18, 1893, Charles O. Mentzer was married to Miss Nettie Adell Wells. Less than two years later John Fred Mentzer was married to Miss Anna May Wells, March 27, 1895.

The parents of Nettie and Anna were Thurston and Saloma (Crandall) Wells. Thurston was a native of New York and Saloma a native of Ohio, but they were married in Iowa, where they both were living.

Charles and Nettie Mentzer started out their home life on a farm, the northeast quarter of Section 36, Twp. 24, Range 14.

Fred and Anna, started their married life on the farm joining on the south of the Charles Mentzer farm, which is the southeast quarter of Sec. 36.

A few years later the Charles Mentzer family moved to the Neosho Falls area, where the parents lived out their lives and are buried in the Neosho Falls Cemetery.



### The family of Charles and Nettie Mentzer

Seated at left, Nettie and Charles O. - Standing starting at left, Paulina and Paul, who were twins, Herbert, Leslie and Gladys.

\* \* \* \* \*

Starting with the oldest of the children:

Gladys married Roy Green in 1918. Their children were Loris Gerald and Kenneth.

Paulina married Osmond Briles. Their children were Walter, Kenneth, who died at age one; Letha Marie, Roberta Adell, and Barbara Ann.

Paul married Ada Saferite in 1920. Their children were Deloris and Eugene.

Leslie Geo. married Vesta Danielson in 1924. Their children were Lila Marie and William L.

Herbert married Ruth Kitterman. They had one daughter Joy.

\* \* \* \* \*

During the 1951 flood, Charles O. Mentzer was living in a small two-story house in Neosho Falls. As the water crept into the house the night the Neosho River went wild, Charles, though almost blind made his way to the upstairs taking with him the Mentzer Family Bible. He was rescued from the upstairs the following day.



### The family of John Fred and Anna May Mentzer

Back row: Hazel, Cecile; second row: Anna May, Pearl Marjorie, J. Fred, son Fred. Little girl on her mother's lap is Aleta, Harley is boy in center and Mildred is sitting on her father's lap.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hazel married Ed Herold. Their children were: Bob Tom, Donna, Edna and Laura.

Cecile married Emil Beine. Their children were: Norman, Doris Ann. Two died as infants.

Pearl married Paul Peterson. They had no children.

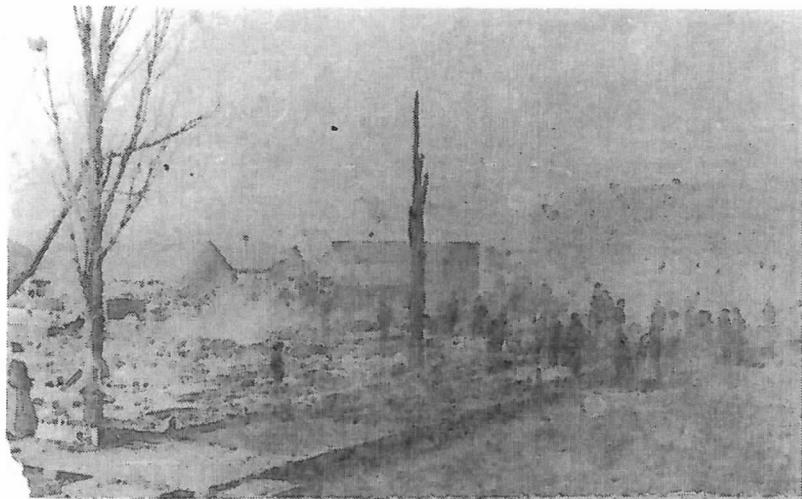
Marjorie married Paul E. Weide. Their children were Elaine and Paul E. Jr.

Fred married Clara Beine. Their children were Melba and Kenneth.

Harley married Winafred McCormick. Their children were Ralph, Ruthanne.

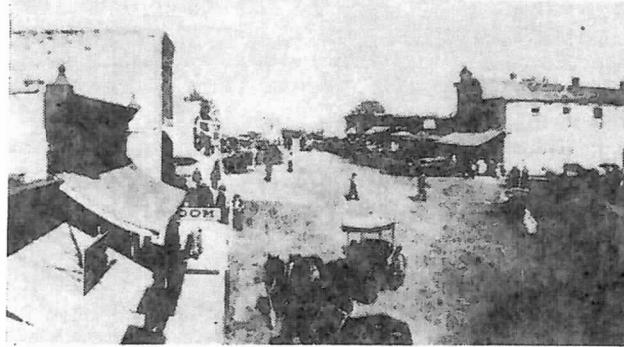
Mildred married John VanValkenburg. Their children were: Marie, Johnnie, Ronnie, Sandra and Daryl.

Aleta married Wendall Tolle. Their children were: Marcia, Phyllis, Gary and Wendall, Jr.

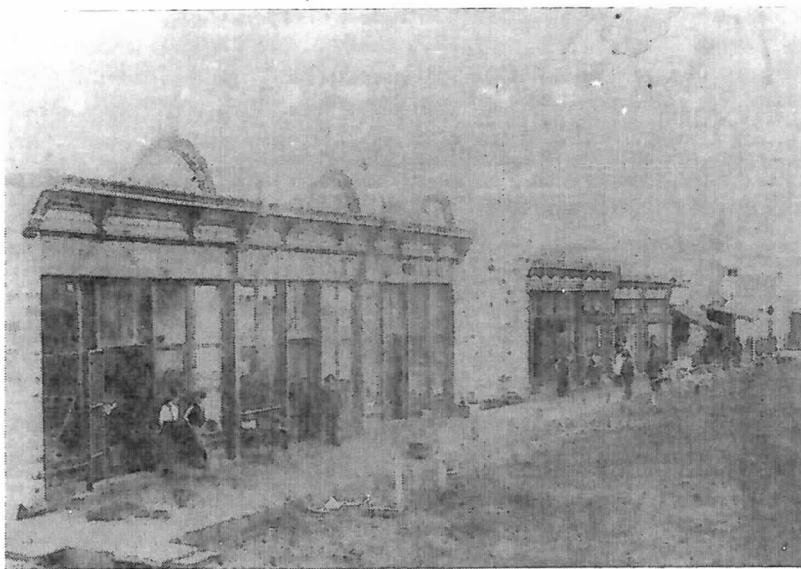


This picture shows the results of a fire in Toronto that burned a block of the main street in the city completely out. This fire occurred sometime after 1900. One source of information believes that it was the south side of the street with the two story building at the end of the block standing, a grocery store.

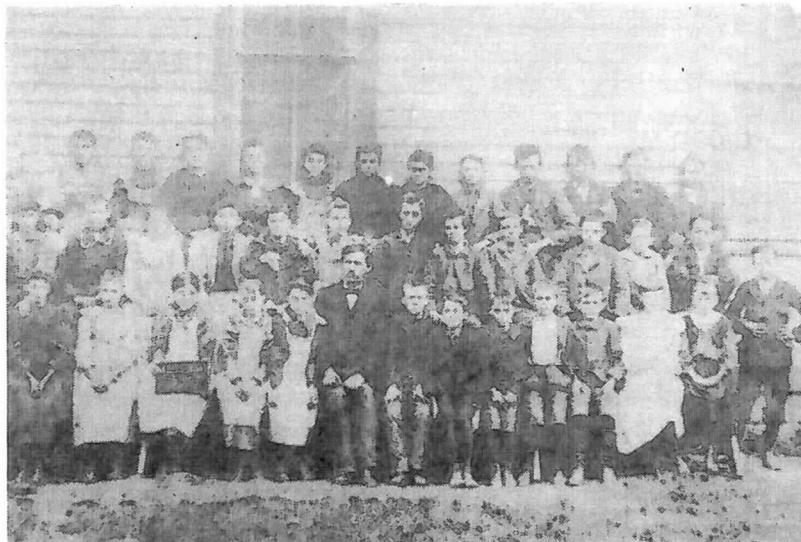
Another source believes that the fire was on the north side of the street that shows a large two story building at the burned out section, and believes that the small building in the center in line with the burned tree was the blacksmith shop of Joe Afflerbaugh. The large building is believed to be the bank.



If the fire was on the north side, then it was the buildings in the left hand corner of this picture with the horses and the surrey in front of the buildings that later burned, with the First National Bank towering above the rest. This picture was taken around 1900.



The south side of the main street in Toronto.



This is a picture of the grade school at Toronto. We do not know the date nor any of the pupils and would like for anyone who can identify the teacher or pupils to please let us know.

## AN EARLY DAY HOME ON DUCK CREEK —

This article is about a family that came to Kansas first in the Kansas River Valley around Lawrence in the early 1850's. Or rather it concerns two families. We have wrote in previous articles about the Pusey Graves family, but this one is also about his wife's parents, John and Bathsheba Witchell. This is taken mostly from a manuscript written by Charles B. Graves, oldest son of Pusey Graves, whose story we told about in the October, 1981 - No. 56, of In The Beginning. The manuscript reads that Charles Graves gave the year that they came here was in 1859, but the date given for the election when Pusey was elected for Justice of Peace of Liberty township as December, 1859. Be that as it may, we will tell it as it was written. Some of this manuscript may contradict our previous stories about the Graves family.

\* \* \* \* \*

"In August, Father (Pusey Graves) and Grandfather (John Witchell), started for the Neosho River to look for a permanent location. They went west on the old Santa Fe Trail to Blackjack and from there southwest to where the City of Ottawa now stands on the Marias des Cygne River, thence down through the old Sac and Fox Agency to Burlington, and then south to Turkey and Duck Creeks in Woodson County.

The country that they passed through was beautiful beyond description. The prairie grass grew rank and tall, as it has never grown since. Above and among it waved flowers of many hues and kinds. I would travel many miles to see again and to have my children see, a scene such as nature presented to every early settler in Kansas. But these things have passed away forever.

It was supposed when my father was looking for a location, that a claim without both timber and water was worthless; that all prairie claim was not worth having. But the claims along all streams already were occupied and the only way to get one was to buy it. Grandfather Witchell bought a claim on Duck Creek having a fine lot of timber and some creek bottom, a small cabin and about five acres of corn. Father would get one for himself later.

We moved down during the last week in October and were caught in a hard rain near Burlington. At this time the streams were running and weather was beautiful. There was no more rain which would effect the streams in the least or which was worthy of the name, until January 1861, or about fifteen months later.

We all moved into and inhabited that cabin, which was just eleven feet in the clear in the inside, eleven in the family. (John and Bathsheba Witchell and son Issac Witchell, Pusey and Jane (Witchell) Graves, Charles B., Mary Ann, George T., Irena, Edward C. and John W. were the eleven). In the northeast corner stood the bedstead of Grandfather and Grandmother Witchell. It was shipped out from Illinois and was a large maple bedstead, handmade with a rope cord. Father and Mother's bed was of the same kind, and it stood in the northwest corner of the room. One of the bedsteads stood lengthwise along the north side of the house and the other along the west side. In the southwest corner stood a bureau, and the cookstove stood near the center of the south wall. Between the stove and the bureau stood a large rocking chair, and between the stove and the southeast corner, next to the door which opened outside, was another chair.

When the whole family was in the house at once it was full -so full, that according to a common saying in such cases it became necessary to "go out of doors to turn around."

The roof was made of clapboards nailed to the rafters cut so long as to make a very steep roof, and this made a loft under the rafters where the children were stowed away to sleep.

On the latter part of November there came a light snow and a cold wave that made the thermometer fall to 14 degrees below zero at LeRoy, our nearest town, as we afterwards ascertained. We had no thermometer of our own. But the weather soon moderated and it remained pleasant all winter. It was dry and very cold.

Perhaps this would be a good place to tell just where this cabin and claim was located. The cabin was along the north side of Duck Creek, in the southeast corner of the northeast quarter of Sec. 24, Twp. 23, R. 14. In March, 1883, the son Issac, deeded the quarter section to John Sturdivan who in turn deeded it to his son Myron D. Sturdivan. This farm now belongs to Keith Owens.

On Christmas we had a big dinner, and that dinner was all right: the table was loaded with the best the woods afforded. Of necessity the table was spread on the lawn. The weather was warm and comfortable. Our invited guests consisted of all the inhabitants residing within three miles, being two families. We had a jolly Christmas day.

Those two families were probably the John U. Raber family whose claim joined on the west and the Joseph and Sarah Bond, whose claim cornered near the cabin of Witchells. The claim of Herman Groesbeck joined on the east side, but he was a bachelor at that time.

During the winter we cut and hauled logs, and built a new cabin sixteen by eighteen, with a leanto for a kitchen and bedroom. We built a large fireplace and having plenty of wood

had a cheerful and comfortable time. The roof was of the primitive kind, logs or ribs built into the top of the building for the purpose of nailing clapboards to. These logs many of them were white hickory used with bark on and cut in the winter. The borers worked in them badly and caused the house to be covered with dust, which was disagreeable in many ways. Also during the winter we made rails and stakes with which we build fences, and early in the spring began work to put in a crop. We built a three railed 'shanghai' stake and rider fence. Being a worm fence set up on stakes and consisted only of the stakes and riders. We broke all the land we could and put in sod, corn, sorghum and other crops suitable for sod ground, while we planted garden in the ground that had been broken the year before.

After the crops were all in and no rain came we hauled and carried water from the creek nearby and watered our garden exspecting rain every day, but it did not come. We waited and watched. Every little cloud that appeared, we hailed with delight and hope. Occasionally there would appear a cloud, lightning and thunder and wind, with every appearance of a storm, but after a short blow a clear sky appeared again without rain except sometimes a few sprinkles. On the seventh day of July the hot winds began to blow. It is impossible to convey any conception of these winds to one who has never felt the like.

The waterholes in the creek rapidly ran dry. Even the sycamore trees along the creek bank died for the want of moisture. We had expended everything we had but could do nothing but stand by and watch it wither in the sun.

Some of our near neighbors left, going back to "their wife's folks", other to adjoining states where there was work. My father could not bear the idea of going back. To retreat implied a humiliation from which he shrank, and besides we were not able to go anywhere. Everything we had was fixed here, so after full consideration it was unanimously decided to stay here with the coyotes and do the best we could."

This was the Great Drought of 1860, lasting from November, 1859 to January, 1861.

It was from this home on Duck Creek that Pusey Graves was elected to the last Territorial Legislature, and got home from the capital in Spring of 1861 in time for spring planting. In the Spring of 1861, Pusey Graves traded a team of oxen for the claim five miles south on Turkey Creek. All of our information concerning the Graves family was that they had moved to the claim on Turkey Creek in Spring of 1859. Incidentially the above story was sent to us by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Markham, who are relatives of the Charles B. Graves who wrote the above interesting story of early day settlers. We also have another story about when a recruiting officer came up Turkey Creek looking for volunteers in the Civil War.

## THE LEVI STEELE FAMILY —

Levi Steele was born in Braceville, Grundy County, Illinois, November 4, 1835. Here he grew up into manhood working on a farm and also training race horses.

Levi Steele was married to Miss Elizabeth Jane Guston, March 13, 1856, at Braceville, IL. Elizabeth was born in New York City, June 9, 1839. They were the parents of 13 children, seven of these were born at Braceville, IL.

Emma Jane Augustine, born January, 1856 - died August 13, 18--.

Perry Elija, born March 11, 1858 - died April 20, 1859.

John (Jon) Alexander, born January 5, 1860 - died December 31, 1932.

Margarite Elvira, born April 8, 1862 - died November 6, 1865.

Maria Elizabeth, born June 24, 1864 - died 194-.

Charles Prisley, born December 7, 1866 - died March 3, 1941.

Perry Willie, born June 26, 1870 - died March 8, 1947.

In 1871, Levi and Elizabeth Jane Steele and five of the above children came west, arriving in Woodson County in the Fall of 1871, settling on 80 acres, the west  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the northwest quarter of section 22, Twp. 24, R. 16. Five miles north and three-fourths west from Yates Center with one of the several branches of North Owl Creek running across the west side. Here six more children were born.

Levi Ellis, born March 9, 1872 - died March, 1954.

Estalla, born April 5, 1873 - died in infancy.

George Augustine, born October 19, 1875 - died August 10, 1963.

Albert (Bert) Palmer, born February 6, 1878 - died ----.

Harriet Luetta, born July 28, 1880 - died April 12, 1883.

Edwin Guston, born March 17, 1882 - died June 30, 1961.

The following Spring after arriving here, 1872, several of the Steele children attended school in the log school house at Askren Dist. #2, distance of around five miles. Emma, age 15; John, age 12; Maria 7 and Charles, age 6. They attended the Spring term, April 22 to July 12, 1872, with Luetta Ford as teacher, and 21 pupils enrolled.

Some of the Steele children grew up in this vicinity that is still known as the Pleasant View community.

Some of them married and settled down in this locality and others made homes around Toronto.

We will not attempt to trace the families of each one of the Steele children, but will tell who each one married. The Charles P. Steele family is the only one we will attempt at this time. Four of the Steele brothers married four girls named Miller. The first three we will tell about were sisters.



**Levi Steele and wife Elizabeth Jane**

\* \* \* \* \*

Emma Jane married --- Augustine.

John married Hester Miller.

Maria married M. E. Crosby.

Charles married Sarah Margaret Hadley.

Perry married Viola Miller.

Levi married Gertie ---.

George married Mattie Jones.

Albert married Gladys Miller.

Edwin married Iva Miller.

Hester, Viola and Gladys Miller were the sisters.

\* \* \* \* \*

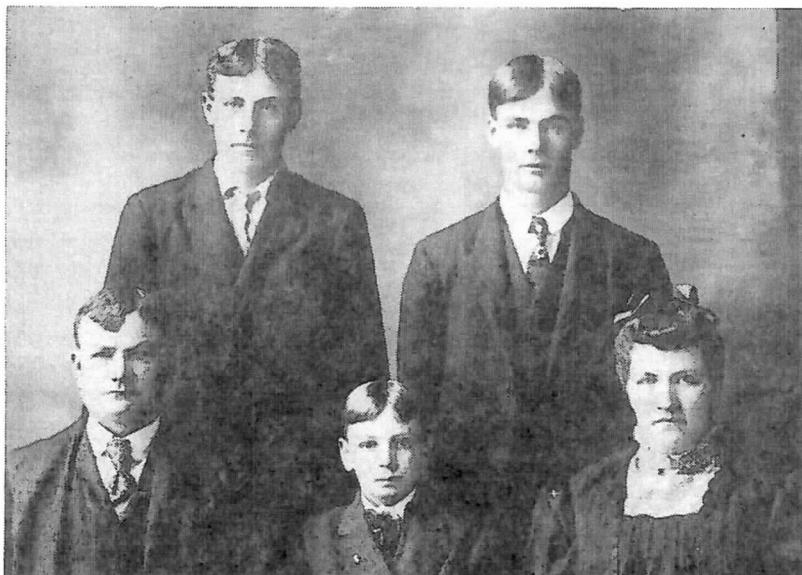
Levi Jr., John and George and families all have lived in the Pleasant View community. George and John lived along Duck Creek also, with some of them living in the Toronto area.

## CHARLES P. STEELE FAMILY —

Charles Prisley Steele son of Levi and Elizabeth Steele was born at Braceville, Grundy County, Illinois on December 7, 1866, and the sixth of a family of thirteen children. Charles grew up in the Pleasant View vicinity. His first schooling was in the Dist. #2 log schoolhouse, walking about 5½ miles to school. Growing up he worked at several jobs in Woodson, Coffey and Allen Counties. At one time he operated a Pony Express (Star) mail route, carrying mail from Humboldt to the various rural post offices in Woodson County.

On November 30, 1889, Charles P. Steele was united in marriage to Sarah Margaret Hadley at Burlington, Kansas. They lived on several farms in the west and north part of Woodson and the southern part of Coffey counties before settling down on the farm, the south 80 acres of the southeast quarter of Sec. 36, Twp. 23, R. 14, where they lived until health failed both Charles and "Maggie".

Charles and Sarah M. were the parents of four children namely, Willie Edwin, Clarence James, Leslie Lee and Goldie J.



This picture of the Charles P. Steele family was taken before Goldie was born. In the picture standing are Clarence J. and Willie E. Seated are Charles P., Leslie Lee and Sarah M.

The family of Charles and Sarah Steele were as follows. Willie E. who was married to Elizabeth M. Metzker. Their children were Myrtle and William E.

Clarence J. and family will follow on another page.

Leslie Lee married Mabel Armstrong. They had a daughter Minnie Mabel. After Lee and Mabel separated he was married to Rosa Scott.

Goldie J. married Carry Macoubrie. They had two daughters, Marjorie and Dorothy.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the meantime while Charles was farming and raising his family he decided to become a veterinarian. As he could not leave his family to go to school he took a correspondence course and graduated from that and got his license to practice. From then on for many years he was known as "Doc" Steele. He had an extensive veterinary practice over the northwest part of Woodson and the southwest part of Coffey County.

The first experience that this writer had with Doc Steele was in the early 1930's, when we were first married. We had a large red cow that got into a cane field and ate too much grain and became bloated. We called for Doc Steele to come, which he did right away. He treated the cow and left some medicine to give her. When we asked him what we owed him he replied, "If she dies you won't owe me anything, but if she gets well you will owe me four dollars." Well, the cow lived as he almost knew she would, so we paid the fee.

At that time the Steele's lived about two miles north of our home place north of Turkey Creek. Along in the early '30's, my brother and I had considerable trouble with influenza fever among our horses, that we had to call on Doc. During those years money was a very scarce article. We could not pay our whole veterinary bill so Doc let us cut down trees and saw up for his winter's supply of fuel.

Clarence J. Steele was born in south part of Coffey Co. near the ranch and town of Crotty was located.



This is a picture of Clarence and his high-stepping horses and top buggy. Years later after he and Nina were married, this writer purchased this top buggy from Clarence for \$35.00. We did not have the high-stepping horses like Clarence, but we used the buggy for several years, before we purchased a 1923 Model T Ford.

Clarence J. Steele and Nina J. Mulsow were married February 13, 1916. Clarence passed away June 20, 1979 and Nina on November 13, 1979. They had been married for 63 years. Their entire married life had been in an area of a few miles on different farms. The last few years of their married life they both were residents of Autumn Manor.

They were the parents of five children, Leona, Hazel, Kenneth, Luetta and an infant son, Clarence Elvin who died January 1, 1923.

Leona M. married Clifford Williams. Their children are Delmar and Marla.

Kenneth married Ellen Dutro. Their children are, K. Loren and Gary D.

Hazel D. never married.

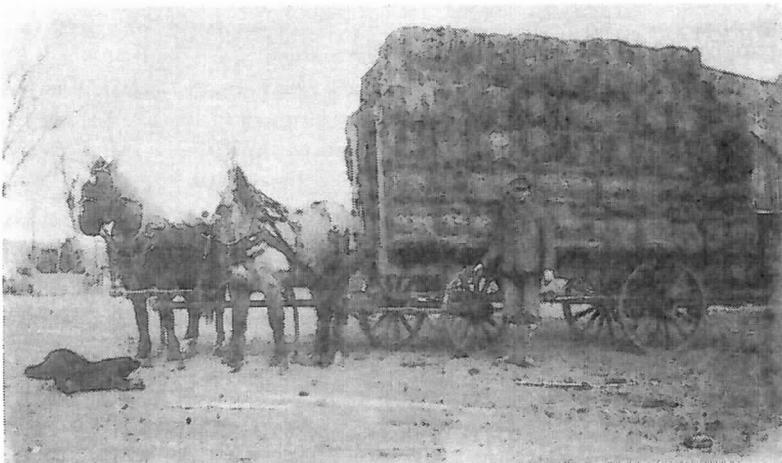
Luetta M. married Laddie Havlik. Their children are James C., Carol E., Ann M., and Jane E.

As mentioned above Clarence and Nina lived their entire married life in the same area which would be the 'Finney Vicinity'. It was under this heading that Nina wrote items for the Yates Center News for many years. Her column was greatly missed when she was no longer able to write.



**Wedding picture of Clarence J. Steele and Nina J. Mulsow,  
February, 1916.**

\* \* \* \* \*



Clarence Steele and his team of horses, Glen and Barney. He is standing by the large load of hay (100 bales). Clarence was a large heavy set man and was very strong. His height and the strength in his arms made him one of the best baled hay handlers in this area.

## NORTH STAR DISTRICT NO. 34 —

Our school house was built in 1871. One of our oldest pioneer friends, Mrs. Apple wrote us this interesting letter.

In the good old days people had better times than now-a-days. There were only four or five families in the neighborhood. When they got together what times they had! The women would go to stay all day, then the men would come in the evening for supper and the house would stretch to hold them all for the night.

In those times there was no railroad west of the Missouri river and all supplies were hauled by ox-team from Fort Leavenworth. When my mother and father settled here, Ute Indians and buffalo were as thick as flies. The Indians would steal anything they could get their hands on, often taking the clothes off the lines on wash days. They would walk into a settler's house and point to something they wanted and demanded it.

Rocks from the foundation of a log house still stand on the Garland farm where I was born in 1867. A flood came down the river when I was a tiny baby. My twin brother died and they carried the little coffin out in a boat and buried it on the Douglas Hill above high water.

One of the present school board members, Ira Saferite was born in a house which was then standing just west of the railroad where Charlie Maley now has a wheat field.

I started my schooling in North Star which was built in 1871. There was only one house in Neosho Falls when my sister, Mrs. Brenner, was born in a house which stood then on the Maley place between their barn and the creek. My cousin was the first child in Neosho Falls.

Old "Squire" Pruett was Justice of the Peace for many years in this community. He was a fine looking gentleman, tall and erect, who held the confidence and esteem of all his neighbors.

He never hesitated to punish wrongdoers, but every one respected his opinions. Two of his sons, Frank and Jim, grew to manhood and settled in this neighborhood. Jim and his mother could not get along, so for years Jim batched by himself in a tent. When "Old Jim" passed on the whole neighborhood lost a friend. Always cheerful and kindly, he went in and out among our homes. Welcome and beloved by all. Over on what is now the Fred Tidd place lived Jimmy Conn, a frugal, forehanded farmer who started with nothing and made a small fortune. Mart Reeves and wife settled on the Brady Lathran place in the early eighties between the farm and the schoolhouse. This large tract of land was owned by Finney and Colonel Goss, which was mostly railroad and grant land.

Mrs. Asa Saferite, our pupil, Calvin Saferite's great grandfather, owned the place where Brodminkle now live. He broke the land with an oxen team. He said when the oxens got hot

they went to the creek to cool off. When they entered the water it was hard to chase them out. He set out under the big tree in the yard.

Calvin Saferite's grandmother taught school in our building 65 years ago. Her husband homesteaded the place where Fred Tidd lives now.

\* \* \* \* \*

The above story about the North Star District 34, school was written in 1936-37. This school house was about two miles due west of Neosho Falls. Mrs. Apple who wrote most of the story was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Balser King, who lived a mile south of where the school house was built. Mary Allie King was married to Clinton Apple. "Allie" Apple lived most of her married life across the road to the north of the school house.

District 34 school house was built in the northeast corner of the northeast quarter of Sec. 36, Twp. 23, R. 16. The old school house is still standing and used as a granery, with a leanto on the north side used as a shed for farm machinery, owned by Glen Saferite.

Teachers of District 34, starting in 1881 are as follows: 1881, Sadie Rathburn, Mr. Curtis, M. J. Gregory, 1884 no school, Matty Brady, Eva Harned, Jessie Van Norman, Lilian Howard, 1888-89, J. W. Withers, Mary Frame, E. J. Dumond, E. Gallier, Myrtle Doeber, Amanda Bittman, Tessa Clark, Margaret Leedy, Dollie E. Brown, Hattie Howard, Maude Moore, Flora Sheids, Margaret Best, Blanche Blagg, Mary Minton, Clara Gollier, Fannie McCormick, Hazel Mentzer, Reva Byfield, 1922-23; Lolene Bryant, Ellis Tidd, Orean Briles, Myrtle D. Smith, Ellis Tidd, 1925-26, Gladys Jackson, 2 terms, Millie Thomas, Hazel Hewitt, Flora Wagner, Marian Gregerson, Willabeth Harris, two terms; Mabel Saulsbury, two terms; Melba Frevert, Doris Draper, three terms; Wanda Hodges, two terms, Dorothy Saulsbury, Mrs. Mary Brubaker, Norma Gaulding, three terms to the end of the school in 1947.

\* \* \* \* \*

In this district like all others in this county, the houses have mostly disappeared, with perhaps 4 or 5 in the whole district. The land for this schoolhouse was given by Ossie Pruitt. We wonder if it is the same man Mrs. Apple mentioned as Old "Squire" Pruitt.

Glenn Saferite and wife Helen are the only ones of an original family name that settled there over a hundred years ago. The land where Glenn Saferite lives was broken out and in a crop on both sides of the road when the section line was surveyed in 1858, by Elwood Woolman.

During the school term of 1918, the clerk, L. G. (Bud) Wolford gave the following report of teacher and pupils going to school at District 34. Bertha Shepard was the teacher and pupils were: Leslie Mentzer, Herbert Mentzer, Edna Saferite, Glenn Saferite, Etta McClannahan, Allen McClannahan, Nellie Heslop, Sidney Heslop, Charley, Irene and Metta Boughton, Raymond and Herman Bell, Roy, Kate, Henrietta, June, Max and Rodney Wolford and Melvin Lee.



Picture of teacher and pupils going to North Star during term of 1920-21. Kneeling in front row from left are: Raymond Bell, Alvin Price, Helen Saferite, Stanley Meyers, Howard Saferite. Next row, Tommy Rideau, Alan McClannahan, Herman Bell, Preston Roberts, Lawrence Stark, 3rd row: Max Wolford, Rodney and June Wolford, Glenn Saferite. 4th row: Everett Stark, Alta McClannahan, Zelma Rideau, Etta Mae Heslop, Frances Stark, Walter Wolford, Josephine Mullens, the teacher Fannie McCormick, Henrietta Wolford.

\* \* \* \* \*

The teacher's term report of School Dist. 34, North Star for the term of 1933-34, Marian Gregerson, who was a graduate of the Vernon Rural High School made the report to district court for one-teacher schools. Pupils going this term were: Betty McCullough, Warren Tidd, Calvin Saferite, Pauline McCullough, Lucile Tidd, Edith Remlinger, Junior McCullough, Ivan Thrall, Fostinia Maley, Forest Denny, Clifford Wells.



This slate held by the girl in the center of the picture tells that this is North Star, Dist. No. 37, and the date is March 27, '08. Pupils are not all identified. In the back row left to right are: Tom and Myron Boughton, Albert Schaede, Etta and Marla Schaede, Anna Heslop (Stovall). In the next row, the first three boys are not known, next girl unknown, next girl, Grace Heslop (Boughton). Next row girl not known, boy with necktie is Charles Boughton, girl with slate is Bessie Schaede, next boy unknown, girl is Florence Dunivan, boy on end is Fred Heslop. Little girl in front with doll, unknown, other girl is Nellie Heslop (Byfield). The teacher at left side was Jennie Bear.



Girls going to the North Star School in the 1920-21 term were front row: Alice Tidd, Helen Saferite, Thelma Boots, Helen Boots, Carol Tidd, Ardell Wolford (Boyer). Back row, Zelma Riddiough, Henrietta Wolford (Heffron), Francis Mullins, Etta Mae Heslop, Alta McClannahan. Hazel Mentzer (Herold). Teacher is not in picture.

## THE OUTLAW ROCKSHELTER —

Just prior to the building of the Toronto Dam and Reservoir, a group of men from the Smithsonian Institution - Bureau of American Ethnology, conducted an Archeological Investigation in the Toronto Reservoir Area under the leadership of Dr. James H. Howard. Their headquarters were out of the River Basin Surveys at Lincoln, Nebraska. They had given this rockshelter or small cave the name of The Outlaw Rockshelter. Their comments were:

This site is a very small rockshelter with a petroglyph on the rear wall. The name derives from a local tradition that this shelter was used by one of the Dalton Gang or Jesse James as a hideout. The shelter is very shallow, low ceiling, and damp.

The petroglyph is possibly a representation of an Indian dwelling covered with grass thatching, pieces of bark or hides. According to local traditions, the initials "N. C." were added by a man named Norman Curtis, about 30 years ago, "to fool people".

For several years before this area was surveyed for a reservoir, the editor of In The Beginning used to work on most of the farms now covered by water. We were told about this small cave that was along the road that followed the bluff on the north side of the Verdigras Valley. It is somewhere under water about a half mile to the east of where the boat dock is on the tip of Toronto Point or where the Marina is located.



We crawled inside of the small cave, turned around and snapped this picture looking south. In the bottom of the picture can be seen the road that ran along the bluff past the homes of George and Frank Curtis. We believe the farmland on the other side of the road belonged to George Curtis.

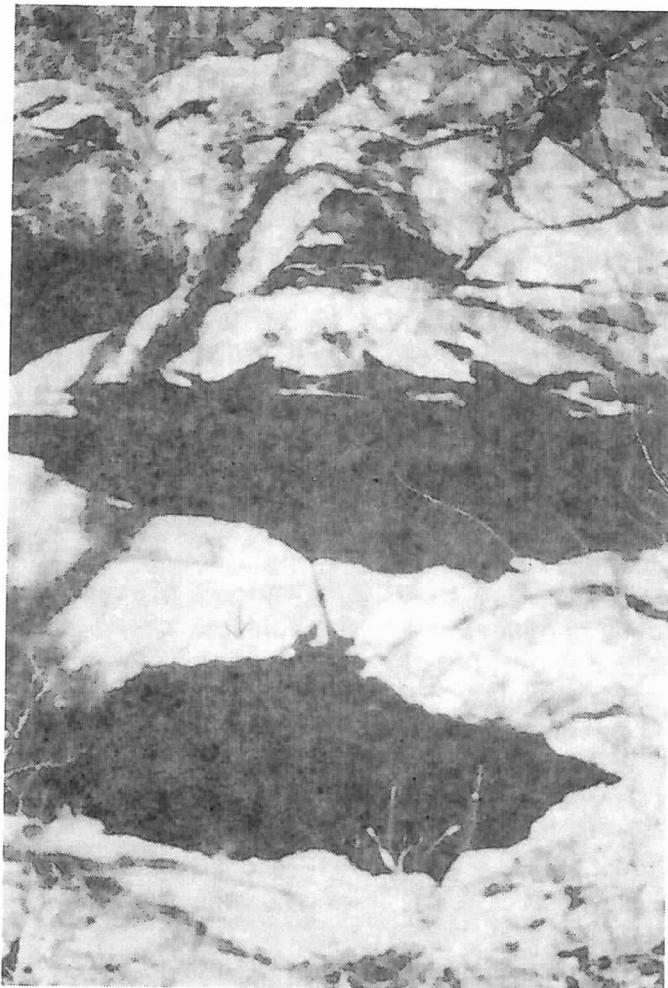


This is a picture we took of the petroglyph or Indian writing that is described above. We are somewhat skeptical of the local tradition that one of the Dalton Brothers or Jesse James used this as a hideout. One had a good view of the valley, but a poor place to hide.

We have heard the story also that Frank and Jesse James had an uncle and aunt just to the north of Coyville and this would not be far from where they were supposed to visit occasionally.

From 1858 until after the Civil War in 1865, the area covered by the reservoir and the bluffs surrounding was rather thickly settled and the law was a group of vigilantes, made up of local men, and have been told that they made their own laws. Between where the present northeast corner of Duck Island and where the little cave or the Outlaw Rockshelter, was a store with a small amount of groceries, but mainly it was known as a tavern.

The closest elected law officers in Woodson County were at Neosho Falls, and in Greenwood County were at Eureka, and none to the south. In the first part of this settlement the Verdigris township, but it was later changed to Toronto Twp.



The opening of the rockshelter was the lower dark place in the picture, the other dark place was an overhanging rock. The opening was around three feet high so that one had to stoop over to get in. After stepping in, the floor was some what lower than the entrance. Perhaps that would explain the dampness.

At the time we took this picture, we did not realize that before, many years ago this cave would be under water.

**PATRONS OF WOODSON COUNTY  
HISTORICAL QUARTERLY**

Brown's Western Auto	Kimbell Ranch-Ed Kimbell
Milton & Virginia Schornick	Daylight Donut Shop
Kenneth & Barbara Stockebrand	Edwin H. Bideau Associated
John V. Glades Agency	Agency, Chanute
Street Abstract Co., Inc.	First National Bank, Toronto
State Exchange Bank	Blackjack Cattle Co., Inc.
Self Service Grocery	Yates Center Elevator
Krueger's Variety & Dry Goods	Jasper's Shopping Spot
HiWay Food Basket	Bill Taylor-Gen. Agent
Piqua Farmers Co-op	Woodson Co. Farm Bureau
Gaulding Oil Co.	Atkin Clinic
Donald E. Ward	Daly Western Supply
Morton Equipment Co.	Jaynes Insurance Agency
Swope & Son Implement Co.	Al's Jewelry
Superior Bldg. & Supply, Inc.	Linde Barber Shop
The Herring Families	Bill Herman
Clyde Hill	Milton & Marcella Wrampe
Steiner's Sundries	Elmer E. Light
Lawrence Flower Shop	Atkin Rexall Pharmacy
Virgil & Iris Winfrey	Campbell Funeral Home
Yates Center News	Glen & Zola Baker
Artex Manufacturing Co.	Piqua State Bank
J. C. Schnell	Thomas Wilson
Gambles Hardware & Home Furnishings	Ken Kimbell
Glen Shaw	Rex Butler, Nashville, TN
Wilma Mark	Edwin G. Reid, St. Louis, MO
Pringle Ranch, J. Richard Pringle	
Campbell Plumbing & Electric	